1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02)1906 Toda

TODAS AND BADAGAS

101 The Todas call a Badaga *Mav*,[1] which seems to be a form of the Canarese word for father-in-law or maternal uncle. The origin of this term is said to have been that when the Todas first met a Badaga, they asked his name and he answered "*Mav*." A Badaga who performs certain services 177 for the *palol* is called *tikelfmav*. Certain elders of the 609 Badagas are also called *madtin*.

Whenever a Toda meets a Badaga *monegar* (headman) or an old Badaga with whom he is acquainted, a salutation passes between the two which is represented in Fig. 69. The Toda stands before the Badaga, inclines his head slightly, and says "*Madtin pudia!*" ("*Madtin*, you have come.") The Badaga replies "*Buthuk! buthuk!*" ("Blessing, blessing") and rests his hand on top of the Toda's head. This greeting only takes place between Todas and the more important of the Badaga community. It would seem that every Badaga headman may be greeted in this way, but a Toda will only greet other Badaga elders if he is already acquainted with them. The salutation is made to members of all the various castes of the Badagas except the Torayas. It has been held to imply that the Todas regard the Badagas as their superiors, but it is doubtful how far this is the case. The Todas themselves say they follow the custom because the Badagas help to support them. It seems to be a mark of respect paid by the Todas to the elders of a tribe with which they have very close relations, and it is perhaps significant that no similar sign of respect is shown to Toda elders by the Badagas.

177 The Badagas perform definite services for the Todas and give what may be regarded as a tribute of grain at the harvest. 651 The tribute is called *gudu*. I did not myself investigate the nature of the *gudu*, and there is some difference of opinion among previous writers[2] as to whether a definite amount of grain

[1] *Mav* is also the Toda word for sambhar.

[2] According to Harkness, "each burgher, hamlet, or village" gives about two quarts (p. 108), or (p. 135) half a bushel to the *ti* and half a bushel to the other Todas. According to Breeks (p. 9), the *gudu* is about one-tenth, one-eighth, or one-fifth of the gross produce.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

or a given proportion of the crop is given. I have no information as to the way in which the giving of the tribute is regulated, and it is eminently one of those points on which evidence must be sought from both Todas and Badagas. In the case of the Kotas, we shall see that there is a definitely

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FIG. 69.—A BADAGA GREETING A TODA

organised system regulating the relations of certain Kota villages to certain Toda clans, and some such system probably exists to regulate the supply of Badaga grain to different clans, but I have no information on the point.[1]

[1] It is possible that the elucidation of this point might also help towards the explanation of the Badaga account of the Toda clans.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

177 The contribution of grain from the Badagas has usually
651 been regarded as given in return for the use of the land, the Todas being supposed to be the original owners of the soil. That this is not the whole explanation is shown by the fact that the Badagas also give a tribute of grain to two other Nilgiri tribes, the Kotas and Kurumbas. Harkness[1] was told by the Badagas that the portion given to the *ti* was in return for the prayers of the *palol*, and that they did not believe that "their crops or their cattle, themselves or their children, would prosper without his blessing." The Badagas also stated that they generally desisted from cultivating their fields when the *ti* was left without a *palol*. They looked on the tribute of grain to the Todas as given of their own good will, while a similar tribute to the Kurumbas was dictated by fear of the consequences of sorcery which might be employed if the duty were neglected.

[754] It has been supposed that the fear of Toda sorcery is one reason for the maintenance of the tribute, and, since the Badagas undoubtedly fear the power of the Toda sorcerers, it is probable that this factor plays a part, though one less important than in the case of the Kurumbas.

[234] Another view which has been taken is that the Todas maintain rights over old dairies in the middle of the Badaga fields, and that any recalcitrance on the part of the Badagas might be followed by the taking up of these old rights. It is possible that the Todas have at some time threatened to resume their rights over disused dairies, but, in the case of the more sacred dairies, the fear of defilement of the sacred buffaloes by approaching a Badaga village would prevent the Todas from putting such a threat into practice.

The grain is probably given, partly because it is an immemorial custom, partly because the Badagas believe that they receive benefits and avoid evils in consequence of the custom.

177 At the present time, the amount of grain supplied by the
437 Badagas is not sufficient for the needs of the Todas, and both grain and rice are bought by the Todas in the bazaar. All the grain used by the *palol* must, however, be that supplied by

[1] P. 136.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

shown by him and by other Teivaliol because I had been told of their peculiarities of language than was ever shown after the exposure of deeds distinctly immoral even from the Toda point of view. I shall return to this subject again shortly; I mention it here because it seemed to me to afford the clearest evidence that the Teivaliol were conscious of their own inferiority in the social scale.

In the story of Kwoten we find that the Tarthar hero is accompanied by Erten of Keadr, a Teivali man, and the latter was said to have been the servant of the former. This suggests the possibility that at one time the Teivaliol may have acted as servants to the Tartharol, even more definitely than at present.

At the present time there are some features of the social organisation and social life which might be held to weigh strongly against the idea that the Teivaliol are the inferior division. The *monegar* of the Todas is one of the Teivaliol, and the most influential member of the *naim*, or council, at the present time is a Teivali man. I believe the monegarship, however, to be a recent institution, possibly dating only from the advent of Europeans to the hills. The chief duty of the *monegar* is the collection of the assessment made by the Government, and it is quite consistent with Toda ideas that this troublesome, and from their point of view menial duty should be handed over to one of the Teivaliol. The great power of the Teivaliol in the *naim* is probably still more recent and due to the influence of one man. The Teivaliol should have only one representative on the *naim*, while the Tartharol should have three, and it is entirely owing to the powerful personality of Kuriolv that this balance has been disturbed, and that the influence of the Teivaliol is so predominant. It is possible that Kuriolv will do much to obliterate the social inequality of the two divisions, though I suspect from what the Todas told me that it is intended to revert to the old order as soon as he dies.

There is one custom which shows very clearly that it is only as dairymen that the Teivaliol have any sanctity. If the sacred buffaloes (*pasthir*) of the Teivaliol go to a Tarthar village, they may be milked either at a *wursuli* or a *tarvali*, and the

3: Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

621 234 others. Each householder in the mand has his own cattle, which he can dispose of absolutely, and their milk is kept for his use; but the whole mand herd graze together, tended generally by the village *pōjāri* (priest), who milks them morning and evening in the monsoon months, and morning only at other times. The milk of all is kept in one dairy-house, which none may enter but the *pōjāri*.

421 428 592 Each family has a recognised head, in whose name the Government grazing *patta** is made out. On the death of the head the eldest son generally succeeds. One old Toda, however, when I asked him which of his sons would take his place, replied, "the wisest." (Compare *Menu*, Chap. IX., Sec. 117:—"Let the eldest have a double "share, and the next born a share and a half, *if they clearly surpass the rest in virtue "and learning.*" Sir W. Jones' translation of the *Institutes* shows that the saving clause of the above section is one of the numerous interpolations by which commentators have attempted to harmonise *Menu's* precepts with modern practice. It is curious to find the same qualification acknowledged by the Todas). The father's property is equally divided among all his sons, but the house goes to the youngest, upon whom falls the duty of supporting the females of the household.

181 177 651 461 The Todas are a purely pastoral people. They have large herds of buffaloes, and depend for support on their produce, with the addition of the *gūdu*,† which they levy in kind from Badagas and Kotas. Labour of any kind they hardly ever attempt; indeed so entirely incomprehensible is the notion to them, that when, on one occasion, an unlucky mistake about the ownership of some buffaloes committed an old Toda to jail, it was found impossible to induce him to work with the other convicts, and the authorities, unwilling to resort to harsh measures, were compelled to save appearances by making him an overseer.

313 Of late years one or two have taken contracts to fell wood,‡ but the result has not been satisfactory to the employers.

531 294 262 The woman do a coarse kind of embroidery with blue and red thread procured from the low country, for ornament to some of their cloths. They use the Nilagiri nettle for stitching their cloths, and English needles; formerly their needles were made by the Kotas. They also cook and fetch water, the men fetch firewood. Whether they live entirely on grain and milk seems doubtful. They admit that they at one time used to eat their male buffalo calves, but deny vehemently that they do so now, having apparently imbibed from their Hindu neighbours an idea that the practice is disgraceful. It is suspicious, however, that the skins of buffalo calves are found in their

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* *Patta*, commonly spelt *puttah* or *pottah*, is a document given by the Collector or Chief Revenue Officer of a district, however styled, to a landholder or other person having rights connected with the land, specifying the conditions on which the land is held, or the nature of the rights.

† *Gūdu*.—Name known among the Hill tribes for the annual gift of grain made by the cultivators to the Todas; said formerly to represent about $\frac{1}{10}$ or an $\frac{1}{8}$ or $\frac{1}{9}$ of the gross produce. *Gūdu*, Canarese for *basket*, sept. The Badagas, after threshing in their fields, bring the grain to the *Kōri* (terrace in front of their houses), and measure it off by baskets before they store it in the granary beneath the *Kōri*. One basket or *Gūdu* out of so many is set apart for the Todas.

‡ See letter to Government appended to Preface. It was said that some Todas worked on plantations, but on further inquiry this was found to be a mistake.—*Editor.*

"border. It is hung over the left shoulder, brought across the back, and forward 291
"under the right arm, the point being flung backwards over the left shoulder again,
"leaving the right arm at liberty, and allowing the folds to fall gracefully about the
"lower part of the person down to the knees." (*Plate* XI.)

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"The female dress (*Plate* IV.) on ordinary occasions consists of a robe similar
"to that of the men, though it is worn differently, being merely thrown over both
"shoulders and clasped in front by the hand."

Singularly massive ornaments are worn by the women (*Plate* V.)[1] A pair of brass 301
armlets worn on one arm above the elbow weighed 6 lbs.

The *Bûguri* (*Plate* XI.) is the only musical instrument they possess. It is a 534
hollow bamboo with holes like a flute, and a piece of horn or wood at the lower end.
The performer blows in at the top and produces a disagreeable sound, aggravated by the
fluttering of a piece of paper inserted between the bamboo and the horn. They are fond 533
of singing, that is, of chanting in a monotonous drone apparently without words. To a
European ear, however,—

"their song is death"
"And makes destruction please."

like that of the Sirens, but for a different reason. They dance in circles with clubs 535
(*Plate* XI.), holding hands or linking arms, and marking time with shouts of *Hoh*,
Hoh.

They generally greet Europeans with a simple salaam; sometimes with a sort of 576
bow or military salute made in a courteous and dignified manner. A Toda woman 609
meeting a man salutes him by raising his feet one after the other to her forehead. An
old woman, however, receives instead of paying this reverence. A Badaga meeting a
Toda lays his hand on the head of the latter. This, and the title *Mâv*, father-in-law,*
which is assigned to the Badagas, seems to imply some belief in the superiority of the
latter.

When Europeans came to the Hills under the auspices of Mr. Sullivan in 1820, *Tenure of land.*
to settle at Ootacamund and elsewhere, one of the first questions that arose, concerned 177
the nature and extent of the Toda rights in the soil.

The subject was discussed for years, during which no attempt was made by 421
Government to have these rights ascertained and defined. Ultimately, however, an 423
inquiry took place, which, amidst a mass of correspondence, elicited the following 451
noteworthy points:—

From as far back as our records extended, it appeared that the Todas had
paid annually a light pasture tax for about 100 *Ballas*† of land, and 2 *Kantirâi*
fanams‡ for each buffalo, and had enjoyed the right of pasturing their herds over

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* A Badaga house is sometimes called *Pâlthchi*, like the Todas' temples.
† A *Balla* = 4 acres nearly.
‡ *Kantirâi fanam* = Or. 4a. 9p. of present money.

[1] [Plate 5A -- Analysis]

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an undefined extent of land. Further, the Badagas and Kota cultivators had always given them annually a portion of their field produce under the name of *gūdu*, but, "*whether out of superstitious motives, or to induce the Todas not to molest them, or in acknowledgment of their proprietary right in the land,*"* was uncertain.

This seems to be the case for the Todas.

On the other hand there is nothing in the Toda occupation which affects the universally acknowledged right of the Government to levy full assessment on all uncultivated land, when actually brought under tillage, a right which the Government had exercised without objection in the case of all lands cultivated by the Badagas and paying *gūdu* to the Todas.

The first step in the settlement of the matter was to declare in 1842 that the Todas had an absolute right in their mands or village sites and in the spots appropriated to religious rites, and had also a claim to compensation† for abandonment of their grazing privileges, but that purchasers from Todas could only buy the right of occupying the land for pasture. On this principle compensation was paid by Government for the area now forming the Ootacamund settlement. Subsequently, on further inquiry, in connexion with the survey of the Hills by Captain Ouchterlony, it was found that the Badagas generally were not disposed to admit the right of the Todas to demand *gūdu* from them at any specified rate, although they acknowledged the practice of giving *gūdu*, and their readiness still to give it "according to their own wants or fancy." It was found too that the Badagas had for some time past sold lands to Europeans and others without any mention of the *gūdu*, and that no claim had subsequently been urged by the Todas on the buyer. On inquiry into the extent of table land over which *gūdu* was claimable, it appeared that on the whole plateau of the Hills there were not more than about a hundred mands occupied and unoccupied, and that the pasturage rights of the Todas, in practice, only extended to the area surrounding each mand. Under these circumstances it was ruled that lands in the proximity of a mand or of spots appropriated to religious rites formed the grazing grounds of the Todas, but elsewhere unoccupied land might be given by Government on lease for building or agricultural purposes. Every lease, however, was to contain a stipulation that *gūdu* would be charged to the grantee, and added to the annual assessment, if it appeared to the satisfaction of the revenue authorities that *gūdu* was payable thereon. Subsequently, in 1863, sales by public auction were substituted for leases. Under orders from Government the revenue authorities have abstained from leasing, or putting up to public auction, land which could be said to be in inconvenient proximity to Toda

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* *Despatch from the Court of Directors to Madras*, dated 21 June 1843, No. 13.

† Compensation equivalent to the *Gūdu* was to be given, and added to the assessment when the land was taken and tilled; and in case the land so taken was a portion of that for which the Todas paid the pasture tax, a proportionate share of the tax was to be remitted.

In *Minutes of Consultation*, dated 7 May 1852, the *Gūdu* equivalent was fixed at 1 anna per Kini (cawny). A Cawny = 1·33 acres.

3. Breeks G-5 (no date) 1873 Toda

177 mands, and I cannot find that in a single instance has *gūdu* been claimed* for lands
421 disposed of by Government.

Thus the rights of the Todas remain to the present day. They receive *gūdu* from
423 the Badagas and Kotas, more or less according to the season and the means of the culti-
651 vator, and they retain possession of their village sites and the surrounding lands under grazing *pattās*, for which they pay two annas an acre in lieu of the taxes formerly levied.

They have an effective mode of extracting the *gūdu* from a refractory Badaga village without reference to law courts. Throughout the district, wherever Badaga cultivation has extended, the Todas have reserved the old sites of their mands and buffalo kraals,† and have persuaded the Badagas that these places, however long abandoned, and now surrounded with cultivation, are in some sense sacred. When a difficulty about the *gūdu* arises, the Todas, by way of an ultimatum, make ready the nearest abandoned mand for habitation. The prospect of having a herd of Toda buffaloes *kraaled* in the midst of their fields soon brings the Badagas to reason.

793 There are five kinds of priests, who rank as follows:— *Relig Rites Cere*

I. *Pālāls* (*Plate* XII.), who, according to the regular sequence of Toda ideas, are a
234 mixture of ascetic and herdsman. They live at isolated mands called *Tiriaris*.

"No female is allowed to go near the mand, nor can any man hold converse with "the Pālaul without special permission, and then only at a considerable distance.

* * * * *

"Great sanctity attaches to the person of the Pālaul in the eyes of his Toda brethren, "and he therefore exerts a powerful influence over their minds. They believe that "God dwells in him, and makes known His will through him to those who come to him "for counsel."‡

There are about nineteen *Tiriaris* occupied at certain periods of the year by five *Pālāls*; two, whose head quarters are near Mukkurti Peak (*Plate* XII.), two near Nanjenād, and one near Kodanād. They have charge of sacred bells, which they carry from mand to mand. The *Pālāls* must be Peiki; the *Tiriaris*, however, belong to certain Tarsezhāl mands, the inhabitants of which elect the *Pālāls*, and furnish each with an attendant called a *Kavilāl*, who may be either a Peiki or Pekkan, and gets six rupees a year, his food, and a cloth, which however he may not wear when in immediate attendance on the *Pālāl*.

The latter gets nothing but the milk of the sacred herd, which is kept for his use at the *Tiriari*; he holds office as long as he chooses, generally for three or four years. One is said to have been *Pālāl* for fourteen years, but this is mentioned as something extraordinary.

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* *Proceedings of the Board of Revenue*, No. 4,749, 29 July 1863, and *Mr. Grant's* Letter of the 17th idem. "Provision was always made in the leases for payment of *gūdu*, and for a few years it was enforced. But "the amount did not exceed a few annas, and the Todas did not care to ask for it."

† *Kraal*, a circular enclosure, in which cattle are penned at night, surrounded by a rough stone wall.

‡ *Tribes inhabiting the Neilgherry Hills*, by Mr. Metz, p. 19.

4: King G-5 (no date) 1870 AWGoToda AWGO

I took the liberty of doing so in one or two instances, but always found them totally destitute of either utensils or furniture, and even of fixtures, beyond a raised earthen ledge along the foot of the wall, answering the purpose of a table. They were all without any light, beyond that which could find an entrance through the aperture which does duty as a door.

The total strength of the Todas at the present day is probably under eight hundred, of all ages. It is impossible to form an estimate of the original importance and numbers of such a people; but there are indications of former Toda *munds* where none now exist, so that the tribe has doubtless been more numerous at some past epoch.

It is the boast of the Todas that they are hereditary and original lords of the soil, and owners of the whole of the Nilgiris, a claim fully allowed by the other tribes, as evidenced by their paying tribute for the land, and owning a sort of feudal vassalage. Each Toda family has its own territorial property, or district, and the Vadacas living on it are, as already stated, simply tenants, paying an annual tax, or rent in kind, for the land they live on or cultivate. We also, I believe, acknowledge their title by paying a yearly tax for our occupation. The natural peacefulness of the Toda tribe, together with their ignorance of war, make it improbable that their ancestors ever forcibly usurped the territory, and they have doubtless always been regarded by the other tribes as a superior race, entitled to it from immemorial possession and residence.

Their language affords no clue to their origin, and is as strange and peculiar as themselves. It is deep-toned, harsh, and difficult of pronunciation, and without written character. It is neither spoken nor understood by the other hill-tribes with whom they are in almost daily contact, though one would have imagined that the necessity for communication for purposes of barter or exchange would, in course of time, have caused a mutual knowledge of their languages; but it is the Todas only who have acquired the means of communication, having just so much knowledge of the speech of their vassals as is demanded by the most ordinary requirements. The Toda tongue is said to comprise words of Sanskrit and Tamul origin, and to have a certain limited similarity in grammatical structure to the latter language. In all other respects, it differs widely from it or any known tongue either of the vast Indian empire, or of any other country. Recent